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Non-Profit Law and Consulting in Conservation of Natural Resources and the Global Environment

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Dear CalFed Policy or Management Committee member:

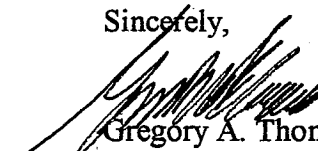
The Natural Heritage Institute (NHI) is pleased to present "The Environmentally Optimal Alternative" to the CalFed Policy and Management Committee members. When the Draft EIR (DEIR) was released last spring, in addition to the customary critique, the CalFed agencies asked for affirmative recommendations for solving the complex restoration and water use challenges of the Bay-Delta estuary. Attached please find NHI's affirmative proposal for achieving these CalFed objectives. We recognize and appreciate your leadership in this effort and would be grateful for your review of this document before the CalFed Policy group meeting on September 14 and 15.

As you will see, this document describes in detail how to develop a non-structural alternative that out performs CalFed's proposal with respect to both the ecosystem restoration objectives and the water supply reliability and Delta system vulnerability objectives. The scope of the programmatic DEIR may need to be expanded to allow for two essential components of NHI's Environmentally Optimal Alternative, namely reversing subsidence on Delta islands and rewatering the San Joaquin River.

This document is very much a work in progress and is in fact still being reviewed by members of the environmental community and other CalFed stakeholders. Our reasoning for distributing this draft now is to stimulate analysis and discussion with the intention of developing further refinements by early October.

NHI continues to hope that the CalFed process can successfully resolve the decades old problems plaguing the Bay-Delta. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Gregory A. Thomas
President